

## **PETS AND SERVICE ANIMALS POLICY**

The Festus Public Library recognizes that some patrons with disabilities may have service animals, which are trained to assist or accommodate a person with a sensory, mental, or physical disability to perform tasks for the benefit of the disabled individual. The library recognizes legal rights under federal and state laws regarding use of service animals. The Festus Public Library also considers the safety and health of all of its patrons, the public, and library staff to be a priority.

No pets or animals, other than service animals, or service animals in training, are allowed in the Festus Public Library with the exception of animals that are included in a program or event sponsored by the library or library staff. Persons with pets will be asked to remove them from the building.

Library staff has the right to ask the animal's handler (1) if the animal is a service animal required because of a disability and (2) what work or task the animal has been trained to perform. Staff are not allowed to request any documentation for the animal, require the animal to demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person's disability. Service animals are not required to be licensed or certified, or be identified by a special harness or collar.

Individuals with disabilities may bring their service animals into all areas of the library where members of the public are normally allowed to go. Service animals must be on a leash, harness or tether, unless the use of a leash, harness, or tether interferes with the animal's effective performance of its task or the person's disability prevents use of these devices. If the animal cannot be leashed, harnessed, or tethered, it must be under the handler's control via voice, signals, or other effective means.

The Festus Public Library may ask that a service animal vacate the premises if the animal is not under the control of its handler or if the animal is not housebroken. In addition, library staff may ask that a service animal be removed from the building if its behavior is a direct threat to the health or safety of others. In these cases, library staff should give the option to obtain services without the animal on the premises. Fear, allergies, or annoyance on the part of other patrons or employees are not considered valid reasons for denying access to people with service animals.

*Approved by the Festus Public Library Board of Trustees on October 1, 2015.*